

**National Volunteer Week in Canada
April 20, 2010**

Statement by Mike Savage

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize National Volunteer Week in Canada and honour the millions of Canadians who make Canada better by giving back to their communities.

Two weeks ago I visited Holy Trinity Emmanuel Parish in Dartmouth, which holds a clothing depot every Wednesday. It is run by a remarkable women, Doris Makarder who, along with Dot, Marilyn, Connie, Eddie and others, gather used clothing, display it and give it to those in need for free and with a smile. It is a wonderful operation and very time consuming, but Doris and her colleagues do it without complaint, thankful for the opportunity to serve.

She is but one face of volunteerism, one of over 12 million volunteers in Canada. Food banks, seniors centres, child care organizations, cultural groups, kids recreation, support for the disabled, the list is endless of those organization that simply would not exist without volunteers.

As a father to children who play organized hockey, soccer, tennis, paddling and are involved in Guides, I am indebted to the coaches, the managers and the organizers. If we think kids sports are expensive now, we should try doing it without volunteers.

Most members of the House have volunteered, but all members of the House have benefited from volunteers. Those who work on our campaigns, and our opponents campaigns, honour us and the democratic process.

Thanks to GPI Atlantic, we do have an economic measurement of the value of volunteers. In its 2008 Nova Scotia Genuine Progress Index, it tells us that volunteers in Canada contributed the equivalent of \$64.9 billion to Canada. Volunteers contributed \$1.8 billion worth of volunteer hours in Nova Scotia alone. The budget for the province of Nova Scotia is \$8.4 billion.

These are staggering numbers, but there is a warning. That number I mentioned is \$370 million less than it was in 1998, as volunteers struggled to find the time and the mechanisms to volunteer.

A sector worth \$65 billion is worth investing in. We need to recognize exceptional volunteers. Governments also need to partner with the voluntary sector to encourage volunteerism.

The spirit of volunteerism is alive, but today's demands are great and we must do everything possible to encourage and support volunteers. They are irreplaceable. They are the heroes of our nation.

This week we say thanks to the 12 million Canadians who make communities better, who offer their time to others and keep Canada better than ever. Thanks very much to the volunteers in Canada.

